Impact of Destination Images and E-WOM on Urban Millennial Decision to Visit Tourism Potential City

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ABSTRACT

Tourism potential in Serang City is almost eliminated and forgotten along with the city's continuous expansion. The role of urban millennials in promoting tourism is now important. Therefore, researchers used urban millennials as respondents in this study. By using SEM analysis with the SmartPLS application, this research was conducted to determine destination image preferences from millennial tourists in Serang City and their influence on e-WOM and the decision to visit. The results indicated support for affective image, price image, and travel motivation positively influence e-WOM. However, e-WOM does not appear to have a significant positive influence on the decision to visit. Additionally, cognitive image is the only factor that positively influences the decision to visit directly. The proposed mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between destination image with the decision to visit is not supported. The findings of this study offer important factors for the destination marketers, policymakers, and businesses of a potential tourism city, in this case Serang City, to consider when developing a specific marketing strategy for this market segment (urban millennials). In addition, the results of this study provide a better understanding of the urban millennial perspective on their decision to visit cities with tourism potential.

Keywords: *Destination Images; e-WOM; Decision to Visit; Urban Millennial; Tourism Potential City*

1. Introduction

In the modern world of global tourism, the way urban millennials choose their travel destinations is a complex process influenced by various factors. As urbanization continues to increase, millennials have become a distinct and influential group with their own preferences, values, and lifestyle choices. Exploring new destinations is a strong desire for urban millennials, so it is important to understand the factors that guide their decision-making. According to Nasar (2022), urban millennials, who are tech-savvy and rely on digital platforms, often use E-WOM as a source of information and guidance when planning their trips. Additionally, the impact of

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destination images on millennials' travel decisions is crucial, as these images encapsulate the emotional and cognitive associations individuals have with a destination.

In the digital era, the influence of e-WOM cannot be overstated. Social media platforms, travel forums, and online review sites have become powerful channels for millennials to share and access firsthand experiences, recommendations, and critiques. The digital discourse surrounding a tourism potential city is instrumental in shaping perceptions, building credibility, and influencing the decision-making process of urban millennials who seek authentic and relatable information before embarking on their journeys (Neuhofer, Buhalis, & Ladkin, 2015). Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has emerged as a powerful influencer in the travel decision-making process.

Destination Images, encapsulating the perceptions and visual representations associated with a particular location, wield considerable influence over the choices of the travelers. The imagery surrounding a tourism potential city plays a vital role in shaping the expectations and anticipations of urban millennials. Whether conveyed through promotional materials, social media content, or personal experiences shared by others, destination images contribute significantly to the formation of preconceived notions that ultimately impact travel decisions (Nasar, 2022).

Understanding the intricate interplay between destination image attributes and e-WOM is essential for stakeholders in the tourism industry, including destination marketers, policymakers, and businesses. By unraveling the factors that drive urban millennials to choose one destination over another, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform strategic decisions and marketing initiatives aimed at capturing the attention and patronage of this influential demographic. Through this research, we aim to contribute to the evolving discourse on destination marketing and tourism management in the context of a dynamic and digitally connected global society. This research delves into the multifaceted dynamics surrounding the urban millennial demographic and their decision to visit a tourism potential city, especially in Serang City.

The tourism potential of the city of Serang has been largely overlooked and forgotten amidst the ongoing development of the city. According to historical records, Serang was once the center of administration during the Dutch colonial period, and some remnants of its history, such as European-style architecture and traces of colonial city planning, still endure. On August 10, 2007, Serang became a part of the Serang Regency. Based on data from the Tourism Office of Banten Province and the Tourism Office of Serang City, in 2018, there were 167 historical and cultural attractions, 14 natural attractions, and 62 man-made attractions in the city. The population is diverse and easily accessible, with the Yogyakarta Palace as a strategic tourist destination in the northern part of Serang, along with developing universities and creative communities. Despite these assets, Serang has not fared well in tourism, as per BPS data, failing to significantly contribute to local revenue (PAD) and attracting a relatively low number of tourists. The number of visitors to Serang remains the lowest in Banten Province after South Tangerang (Tangsel). Consequently, this study focuses on two pivotal elements that significantly influence urban millennials decision to visit Serang City, destination images and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

2. Literature Review

The concept of destination image plays a pivotal role in shaping individual's perceptions and decisions related to travel. Baloglu & Mccleary (1999) emphasize its multidimensional nature, highlighting how promotional materials, personal experiences, and word-of-mouth contribute to the formation of destination images. In the digital age, the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on travel decisions, especially among millennials, cannot be understated.

(Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008) stressed the significance of online reviews and social media recommendations in shaping consumer choices within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The decision to visit a destination is a complex process influenced by various factors, with destination image being a crucial component. Concurrently, urban millennial behavior adds another layer of complexity to travel decisions. Armutcu et al. (2023) explored travel information sources and destination choices among international millennials contributes to understanding their distinct travel behaviors, millennials, born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s, exhibit unique preferences, seeking authentic experiences shaped by digital connectivity and social consciousness.

When considering the intersection of destination images, e-WOM, and the decision to visit, it becomes essential to explore how these factors collectively influence travel choices, particularly among urban millennials. Wang & Herrando (2019) study on the influence of destination image and tourist satisfaction on loyalty provides a framework for understanding the interconnected nature of these variables. This foundational knowledge establishes a comprehensive understanding of destination image, e-WOM, the decision to visit, and urban millennial behavior, laying the groundwork for further research into how these factors collectively shape travel decisions within this demographic.

Moreover, the influence of e-WOM on travel decisions has gained prominence in contemporary research. (Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2020) investigate the impact of online reviews on destination image and travel intention, shedding light on the interconnectedness of e-WOM and the decision-making process. As urban millennials are known to heavily rely on online platforms for information and recommendations, understanding the dynamics between e-WOM and the decision to visit becomes crucial.

In the context of urban destinations, the work of (Lu & Gursoy, 2015) on destination attractiveness and destination loyalty provides valuable insights into how the perceived appeal of urban areas influences tourists' decisions. Additionally, the study by Koc and Ayyildiz (2021) delves into the role of technology in enhancing the tourist experience in urban destinations, showcasing the growing importance of digital factors in travel choices. To comprehend the intricate relationship between destination image, e-WOM, the decision to visit, and urban millennial behavior, it is essential to consider their interplay within the broader tourism landscape. As urban areas increasingly become focal points for millennial travelers seeking diverse experiences, these variables collectively contribute to shaping the evolving landscape of contemporary travel decision-making.

The contemporary tourism landscape is witnessing a transformation fueled by the dynamic preferences and decision-making processes of urban millennials. Within this context, there is a critical need to unravel the complex relationship between destination images and e-WOM, both recognized as influential factors in travel decision-making (Reswari et al., 2022; Anzani et al., 2022; Widyastuti & Putri, 2023). While existing research has individually emphasized the role of destination images in shaping preconceptions (Hafidzah & Hayadi, 2024), and the impact of E-WOM in the digital age (Nasar, 2022), a notable gap persists in understanding how these elements collaboratively influence the decision-making processes of urban millennials, particularly when faced with the choice of visiting a tourism potential city.

The research problem stems from the limited insight into the synergistic effects of destination images and e-WOM on the decision-making behaviors of urban millennials. Despite the significance of these factors, there is a notable gap in the existing literature regarding their combined influence on the decision-making process of urban millennials, especially in the context of cities with emerging tourism potential. Understanding how destination images and e-WOM interact and jointly contribute to the decision to visit a city with potential tourism opportunities is

paramount for destination management, marketing strategies, and the overall enhancement of urban tourism experiences.

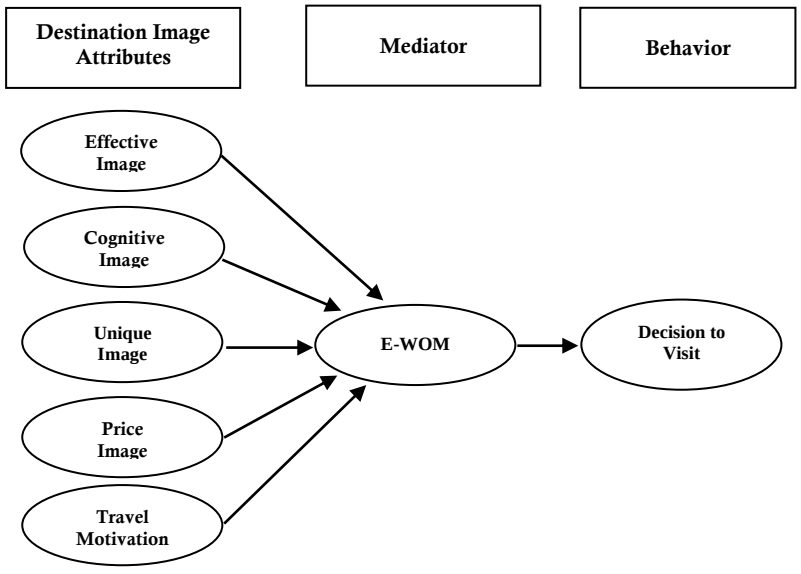
Accordingly, this research aims to bridge this gap by exploring and analyzing the intricate relationships between destination image attributes (affective image, cognitive image, unique image, price image, and travel motivation), e-WOM, and the decision to visit of urban millennials. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and marketers, guiding them in crafting effective strategies to attract and engage this influential demographic group in exploring the untapped tourism potential of cities. Ultimately, the research aspires to contribute to the broader understanding of contemporary travel behavior and decision-making processes in the context of urban millennials and emerging tourism destinations.

3. Method

The study specifically targets urban millennials, who have either visited tourism potential city (Serang) or are potential tourists. The study employs a quantitative approach, and the data collection method involves an online survey using a questionnaire designed to measure the influence of destination image attributes on e-WOM and the decision to visit. Purposive sampling ensures the selection of respondents with specific characteristics, and the survey encompasses sections on destination image attributes, e-WOM, and the decision to visit.

The research aims to shed light on the nuanced relationships among affective image, cognitive image, unique image, price image, travel motivation (independent variable), e-WOM (mediator), and the decision to visit (dependent variable). This comprehensive analysis utilizes Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) within the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework. Statistical analysis is crucial due to the complexity of multivariate relationships, potential biases, and the need to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2023)

By employing advanced statistical methods, the study seeks to explore the intricate interplay between various factors influencing the decision-making process of urban millennials when it comes to visiting a tourism potential city (Serang). The inclusion of demographic characteristics further enriches the understanding of the surveyed population. The findings aim to contribute valuable insights for academics and practitioners in destination marketing and management.

Table 1. Research Variables and Instruments

No	Label	Measurement Items	Supporting References	Measuring Scale
1	AI	Affective Image		
	AI1	Somber-Exciting	Baloglu & McCleary (1999)	Likert scale (1-4) (Strongly disagree - Strongly agree)
	AI2	Unpleasant-Pleasant		
	AI3	Sleepy-Arousing		
	AI4	Sad-Relaxing		
2	CI	Cognitive Image		
	CI1	The variety and quality of accommodation is adequate		
	CI2	Friendly and interesting locals		
	CI3	Easy destination accessibility	Widayati, 2020	
	CI4	The destination's reputation is good		Likert scale (1-4)
	CI5	Offers exotic destinations		
	CI6	Hygiene and cleanliness according to standards	Baloglu & McCleary (1999)	
	CI7	Infrastructure quality		
	CI8	Unpolluted / Pure Environment		
	CI9	Good Climate		
3	UI	Unique Image		
	UI1	Cultural and historical attractions		
	UI2	Cultural diversity		
	UI3	Friendly service		
	UI4	Interesting Local Food		
	UI5	Beautiful Views/Natural Attractions	Widayati, 2020	Likert scale (1-4)
	UI6	Department store		
	UI7	Famous local product		
	UI8	Good Nightlife dan Entertainment		
	UI9	Bicycle tour		
	UI10	Festival activities		
4	PI	Price Image		
	PI1	Tourist destinations worth the money spent	Widayati, 2020	Likert scale (1-4)
5	TM	Travel Motivation		
	TM1	Eliminates stress and tension		
	TM2	Escape from routine		
	TM3	Doing exciting things		
	TM4	For fun, entertainment and adventure	Baloglu & McCleary (1999)	Likert scale (1-4)
	TM5	Learning new things that increase knowledge		
	TM6	Gain new experiences from different cultures and ways of life		
	TM7	Meet people with similar interests		
	TM8	Go where no one else has gone		
6	e-WOM	Electronic Word of Mouth		
	e-WOM1	I often read other tourists online travel reviews to see which cities make a good impression on others		
	e-WOM2	To make sure I choose the right tourist city (like Serang), I often read other tourists online travel reviews		
	e-WOM3	I often consult other tourists' online travel reviews to help choose interesting cities (like Serang)	Pektas, Güneren, & Tepavcevic (2019)	Likert scale (1-4)
	e-WOM4	I often gather information from travelers' online travel reviews before I travel to a particular city (like Serang)		
	e-WOM5	If I don't read tourist online travel reviews when I travel to a city (like Serang), I worry about my decision		
	e-WOM6	When I travel to a city (like Serang), tourists' online travel reviews give me confidence to travel to the city		
7	DtV	Decision to Visit		
	DtV1	I predict I will visit Serang City in the future	Pektas, Güneren, & Tepavcevic (2019)	Likert scale (1-4)
	DtV2	I will visit Serang City rather than other tourist cities		
	DtV3	If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit Serang City in the future		
	DtV4	I recommend other tourists to travel to Serang city		

The hypothesis of this research is as follows :

H1a: Effective image has positive effects on e-WOM

H1b: Cognitive image has positive effects on e-WOM

H1c: Unique image has positive effects on e-WOM
H1d: Price image has positive effects on e-WOM
H1e: Travel motivation has positive effects on e-WOM
H2: e-WOM has positive effects on the decision to visit
H3a: Effective image has positive effects on e-WOM
H3b: Cognitive image has positive effects on e-WOM
H3c: Unique image has positive effects on e-WOM
H3d: Price image has positive effects on e-WOM
H3e: Travel motivation has positive effects on e-WOM
H4a: e-WOM mediates the relationship between affective image and the decision to visit
H4b: e-WOM mediates the relationship between cognitive image and the decision to visit
H4c: e-WOM mediates the relationship between unique image and the decision to visit
H4d: e-WOM mediates the relationship between price image and the decision to visit
H4e: e-WOM mediates the relationship between travel motivation and the decision to visit

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Background

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed group.

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents (n = 197)

Items	Frequency	Percentage/% (valid response)
Country of Origin		
Indonesia	197	100
Gender		
Female	110	55.8
Male	87	44.2
Year of Birth		
> 1980	30	15.2
1980 - 1988	9	4.6
1989 - 1996	83	42.1
< 1996	74	37.6
Monthly Income		
< Rp 3.000.000,-	41	20.8
Rp 3.000.000 – Rp 5.000.000,-	119	60.4
Rp 5.000.001 – Rp 10.000.000,-	32	16.2
>Rp 10.000.000,-	5	2.5
Last Visit to Serang City		
Within the last year	94	48
Within the last 2-4 years	10	5.1
More than 5 years ago	28	14.3
Other (within the last month/native resident)	65	32.6

All respondents are from Indonesia, comprising 55.8% females and 44.2% males. The distribution of birth years indicates that the majority of respondents (42.1%) were born between 1989 and 1996. Regarding income, most respondents (60.4%) earn between Rp 3,000,000 and Rp 5,000,000 per month, while 20.8% earn less than Rp 3,000,000. Concerning their last visit to Serang, 48% of respondents visited in the last year, 5.1% in the last 2-4 years, and 14.3% more than 5 years ago. Additionally, 32.6% had recently visited, such as within the last month or were native residents of Serang City.

4.2. Data Analysis

Hypothesis testing in this research employs the SEM-PLS analysis technique using the SmartPLS program. There are 7 (seven) constructs (latent variables [LV]) in this study, namely Affective Image (AI), Cognitive Image (CI), Unique Image (UI), Price Image (PI), Travel Motivation (TM), e-WOM, Decision to Visit (DtV).

The first analysis is the evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R^2). R^2 assesses the portion of variance in the endogenous variable explained by the structural model, indicating the quality of the adjusted model. Cohen (1988) stated that R^2 = 2% is considered small, R^2 = 13% is moderate, and R^2 = 26% is considered large in the fields of social and behavioral sciences. In the PLS-SEM diagram, we can observe R^2 from the figures on the circles or the R-square report table.

The coefficient of determination for the endogenous latent variable e-WOM is 0.396. The interpretation of this value is that the five latent variables—Affective Image, Cognitive Image, Unique Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation—from the millennial generation's perspective sufficiently explain 39.6% of the variance in e-WOM. Meanwhile, e-WOM and the five destination image attributes variables together explain 34.2% of the variance in Decision to Visit (DtV) since R^2 DtV is 0.342. According to Cohen's (1988) classification, both R^2 values have a significant impact.

4.3. Checking Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability

The analysis of Table 2 indicates that the latent variables (constructs) from SEM present AVE values > 0.50. In this situation, observed variables (indicators) should not be removed from the constructs because all AVE values are above 0.50 (Petter, Straub, & Rai, 2007). In short, Table 2 provides reliability and validity measures for various constructs in a research study. Overall, these constructs exhibit strong internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.7. The Composite Reliability values, which also assess internal consistency, further support the measurement model's reliability.

Table 3. Values for adjustment quality for the SEM model

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Affective Image	0.828	0.883	0.654
Cognitive Image	0.924	0.936	0.622
Unique Image	0.886	0.907	0.520
Price Image	1.000	1.000	1.000
Travel Motivation	0.900	0.921	0.597
e-WOM	0.878	0.907	0.622
Decision to Visit	0.864	0.907	0.710

Moreover, these constructs demonstrate acceptable convergent validity, as indicated by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.5 for most constructs, although Unique Image shows a relatively lower AVE. Specifically, the Price Image construct has perfect reliability and validity scores, suggesting highly consistent and distinct measurements. These findings indicate that the measurement model is robust, instilling confidence in the reliability and validity of the considered constructs. Researchers may want to pay special attention to the Unique Image construct for potential improvement; however, overall, the results affirm the credibility of the measurement instruments used in the study.

The next step involves examining the internal consistency values using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) after confirming convergent validity. Traditionally employed in social science research, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) tends to yield conservative measurements in PLS-SEM (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2013), relying on correlations between variables. In contrast, CR is better suited for PLS as it prioritizes variables based on their reliability, being less sensitive to the number of variables within each construct. Both CA and CR are utilized to evaluate whether the sample is unbiased or if responses can be trusted within the group (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). CA values above 0.60 and 0.70 and CR values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 are deemed satisfactory in exploratory studies. Table 2 demonstrates that CA and CR values are adequate since all constructs exhibit CA and CR values surpassing 0.70.

4.4. Evaluate the Discriminant Validity

Table 3 displays the Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis used to assess discriminant validity. According to the table, it is evident that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpass the correlations between variables. Consequently, the variable constructs are considered valid as AVE values exceed the correlation coefficients, indicating well-established discriminant validity. With the confirmation of discriminant validity, adjustments to the measurement model are concluded, and the analysis of the structural model can commence.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

	AI	CI	DtV	PI	TM	UI	e-WOM
Affective Image	0.809						
Cognitive Image	0.316	0.789					
Decision to Visit	0.315	0.442	0.843				
Price Image	0.306	0.456	0.358	1.000			
Travel Motivation	0.288	0.475	0.487	0.571	0.772		
Unique Image	0.337	0.482	0.494	0.604	0.754	0.705	
e-WOM	0.322	0.308	0.414	0.478	0.585	0.527	0.788

The provided correlation matrix offers insights into the relationships among various constructs in the researched context. Affective image and Cognitive image show a strong positive correlation of 0.809, indicating a significant relationship between emotional and cognitive perceptions. The Decision to Visit shows a positive correlation with Affective image and Cognitive image (0.315 and 0.442, respectively), emphasizing the influence of these images on the decision-making process. Price image exhibits a moderate correlation with Affective image and Cognitive image (0.306 and 0.456, respectively), indicating a notable yet not overly strong relationship. Travel motivation demonstrates a series of positive correlations with other constructs, particularly with Unique Image (0.754), highlighting motivational aspects in the travel context. A perfect correlation of 1.000 between Price Image and Price Image itself indicates a perfect linear relationship, suggesting potential redundancy in measurement. Researchers should be cautious of such high correlations and may consider refining or reevaluating the steps taken to construct specificity. Overall, this correlation matrix provides a different understanding of the relationships among the main variables, serving as input for future analyses and discussions in the research domain.

4.5. Inner Model path Coefficient Sizes and Significance

According to Hair et.al. (2010), the absolute value of the t-statistic should be greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.96 to achieve a significance level of 0.05 for a two-sided test. From Table 4, it is concluded that the travel motivation variable shows a highly significant impact on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), as indicated by the t-statistic of 4.067. Cognitive image also demonstrates statistical significance in influencing the Decision to visit, supported by a t-statistic of 2.839.

Table 4. t-Statistics of Path Coefficients (Inner Model)

Variable	t-Statistics
Travel Motivation → e-WOM	4.067
Cognitive Image → Decision to Visit	2.839
Unique Image → Decision to Visit	1.841
Price Image → e-WOM	2.131
Travel Motivation → Decision to Visit	1.457
e-WOM → Decision to Visit	1.919
Affective Image → e-WOM	2.133
Unique Image → e-WOM	1.069
Affective Image → Decision to Visit	1.491
Price Image → Decision to Visit	0.543
Cognitive Image → e-WOM	0.511

Although Unique image seems to have a significant impact on Decision to visit with a t-statistic of 1.841, caution is required due to its relatively lower value. Price Image shows a significant impact on e-WOM with a t-statistic of 2.131. Meanwhile, Affective image, Travel Motivation, and e-WOM individually contribute significantly to Decision to visit, with t-statistics of 1.491, 1.457, and 1.919, respectively. On the other hand, the relationship between Price image and Decision to visit, as well as Cognitive image and e-WOM, does not show statistical significance based on their respective t-statistics of 0.543 and 0.511. These findings provide different insights into the strength and importance of various associations in the model, assisting researchers in refining their understanding of factors influencing travel-related decisions and e-WOM information.

4.6. Hypothesis Results

Table 5 shows the path coefficient results of all hypotheses stating that destination image attributes influence e-WOM. The hypothesis results are influenced by t-statistic scores and p-values. As stated by Hair et al. (2014), if the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, it means there is a significant difference regarding the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 5. Path coefficient result of the hypotheses

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	P Values
Destination Image Attributes and e-WOM						
H1a	Affective Image → e-WOM	0.138	0.140	0.065	2.133	0.033
H1b	Cognitive Image → e-WOM	-0.051	-0.043	0.077	0.658	0.511
H1c	Unique Image → e-WOM	0.105	0.108	0.098	1.069	0.285
H1d	Price Image → e-WOM	0.172	0.167	0.081	2.131	0.034
H1e	Travel Motivation → e-WOM	0.392	0.389	0.096	4.067	0.000
e-WOM and Decision to Visit						
H2	e-WOM → Decision to Visit	0.147	0.149	0.076	1.919	0.056
Destination Image Attributes and Decision to Visit						
H3a	Affective Image → Decision to Visit	0.105	0.106	0.070	1.491	0.137
H3b	Cognitive Image → Decision to Visit	0.223	0.221	0.079	2.839	0.005
H3c	Unique Image → Decision to Visit	0.190	0.195	0.103	1.841	0.066
H3d	Price Image → Decision to Visit	-0.045	-0.046	0.083	0.543	0.587
H3e	Travel Motivation → Decision to Visit	0.148	0.149	0.102	1.457	0.146

Based on the results of the statistical analysis, it reveals significant patterns in the relationships between the main constructs. Travel Motivation shows a significant influence on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), supported by a sufficiently large t-statistic of 4.067 and a very low p-value. Similarly, Cognitive image significantly influences Decision to visit, as indicated by a t-statistic of 2.839 and a p-value of 0.005. Price Image emerges as a significant factor in influencing e-WOM, with a t-statistic of 2.131 and a p-value of 0.034. However, the impact of Unique image on Decision to visit and e-WOM shows marginal significance, with t-statistics of 1.841 and 1.069, and p-values of 0.066 and 0.285, respectively. Several hypotheses, including those involving Affective image and e-WOM, also show significant relationships. On the other hand, relationships like Price image → Decision to visit and Cognitive image → e-WOM do not have statistical significance. These findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of various factors influencing travel-related decisions and electronic word of mouth, guiding researchers in refining their understanding and potentially offering practical implications in relevant domains.

4.7. Mediation Effect of e-WOM

Table 6 summarizes the coefficients of the mediating effect of e-WOM between destination image attributes and Decision to Visit (DtV).

Table 6. Path Coefficient of "Mediation Effect of e-WOM"

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/ STDEV|)	P Values
H4a	Affective image -> e-WOM -> DtV	0.020	0.022	0.017	1.158	0.248
H4b	Cognitive image -> e-WOM -> DtV	-0.007	-0.007	0.014	0.523	0.601
H4c	Unique Image -> e-WOM -> DtV	0.025	0.024	0.018	1.376	0.169
H4d	Price image -> e-WOM -> DtV	0.057	0.059	0.037	1.551	0.121
H4e	Travel motivation -> e-WOM -> DtV	0.015	0.016	0.019	0.800	0.424

The analysis of hypotheses presented in the table indicates that, in the context of the study, none of the tested relationships between destination image attributes, e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth), and Decision to Visit (DtV) are statistically significant. E-WOM does not serve as a mediator. Specifically, Affective Image, Cognitive Image, Unique Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation do not exhibit substantial impacts on e-WOM or subsequently on the Decision to Visit, as evidenced by p-values exceeding the conventional significance level of 0.05. These results suggest that the factors under investigation may not play a significant role in shaping e-WOM and travel decisions within the studied population.

Table 7. Summary of test results for the research hypotheses

Hypotheses Number	Hypotheses	Results
Attributes and e-WOM		
H1a	Affective image positively influences e-WOM	Supported
H1b	Cognitive image positively influences e-WOM	Not supported
H1c	Unique image positively influences e-WOM	Not supported
H1d	Price image positively influences e-WOM	Supported
H1e	Travel motivation positively influences e-WOM	Supported
e-WOM and Decision to Visit		
H2	e-WOM positively influences the decision to visit	Not supported
Attributes and Decision to Visit		
H3a	Affective image positively influences the decision to visit	Not supported
H3b	Cognitive image positively influences the decision to visit	Supported
H3c	Unique image positively influences the decision to visit	Not supported
H3d	Price image positively influences the decision to visit	Not supported
H3e	Travel motivation positively influences the decision to visit	Not supported
The Mediating Role of e-WOM		
H4a	e-WOM mediates the relationship between affective image and the decision to visit	Not supported
H4b	e-WOM mediates the relationship between cognitive image and the decision to visit	Not supported
H4c	e-WOM mediates the relationship between unique image and the decision to visit	Not supported
H4d	e-WOM mediates the relationship between price image and the decision to visit	Not supported
H4e	e-WOM mediates the relationship between travel motivation and the decision to visit	Not supported

In fact, the relationship between destination images, e-WOM, and the decision to visit a destination is a complex interaction influenced by many factors. The wide range of information sources available to urban millennials, such as official destination websites and traditional media, can lessen the impact of e-WOM. Badir and Andjarwati (2020) stated that concerns about the trustworthiness of online recommendations, as well as personal experiences, may overshadow the influence of digital word-of-mouth. This result is comparable with (Slamet, Prasetyo, & Azmala, 2022) which explained the complexity of decision-making, influenced by personal preferences, travel goals, and budget considerations, also contributes to the variation in the role of e-WOM.

The abundance of information in the digital age, time constraints, cultural differences, and selective exposure also could have significant effects on this relationship (Samudro & Hamdan, 2021). To gain a better understanding, it is important to conduct empirical research that is specific to different contexts and cultural backgrounds.

Consequently, the study highlights the potential limitations of these particular image attributes in influencing the decision-making process related to travel and electronic word-of-mouth promotion. Further research may be warranted to explore additional variables or contextual factors that could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved in the decision-making processes of the target demographic. Table 7 provides a summary of the conceptual framework outcomes regarding the relationships of hypotheses.Table presents the results of various hypotheses within the conceptual framework. The first set of hypotheses (H1a to H1e) examined the influence of different attributes on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). Among these, Affective image and Price image were supported, indicating a positive influence on e-WOM, while Cognitive image, Unique image, and Travel motivation did not show significant support.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) investigated the direct influence of e-WOM on the decision to visit. Surprisingly, this relationship was not supported, suggesting that e-WOM may not play a significant role in directly influencing the decision to visit. The third set of hypotheses (H3a to H3e) explored the direct impact of attributes on the decision to visit. However, none of these hypotheses received support, indicating that Affective image, Cognitive image, Unique image, Price image, and Travel motivation did not significantly influence the decision to visit.

The final set of hypotheses (H4a to H4e) focused on the mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between attributes and the decision to visit. However, none of these hypotheses received support, suggesting that e-WOM may not mediate the relationship between the attributes (Affective image, Cognitive image, Unique image, Price image, Travel motivation) and the decision to visit. Overall, the results highlight a nuanced and complex interplay between these variables, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing tourists' decisions and the role of e-WOM in the process.

5. Discussion

Table 1 provides detailed information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents participating in this study. The demographic composition includes aspects such as gender, year of birth, income, and the last visit to Kota Serang. Table 1 provides valuable insights into the composition and characteristics of the surveyed population, thus providing a foundation for further analysis or decision-making in a relevant context. These results offer a comprehensive overview of the surveyed population, particularly in the context of the urban millennial focus of the research.

The tested model consists of seven constructs: Affective Image (AI), Cognitive Image (CI), Unique Image (UI), Price Image (PI), Travel Motivation (TM), e-WOM, and Decision to Visit (DtV). In this study, SEM-PLS analysis using SmartPLS application produced interesting findings regarding the relationships among the investigated variables. The evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R^2) served as a measure of the quality of the adjusted model, referencing Cohen's (1988) perspective.

Statistical results indicate that the five latent variables (Affective Image, Cognitive Image, Unique Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation) from the millennial generation's perspective can explain a substantial amount of variance in e-WOM (39.6%) and Decision to Visit (34.2%). These findings align with a study by Nur'afifah & Prihantoro (2021) explaining that travel decisions can be determined by various motives. Additionally, Song et al. (2021) also elaborated on young travelers using e-WOM for purchase decisions. The research findings provide valuable insights into the factors influencing electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) promotion within the

study's context. It is evident that Affective Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation are the key attributes that significantly drive e-WOM promotion, highlighting the importance of emotional and motivational factors in shaping consumer behavior in the digital realm. Conversely, Cognitive Image demonstrates constraints in its ability to influence e-WOM, implying that while rational or cognitive elements remain relevant, they might not wield as much influence as emotional or affective dimensions in stimulating online sharing behaviors.

Analysis of Table 4 shows that all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50, validating the reliability and validity of the constructs in this study. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values surpass conventional thresholds, indicating strong internal consistency in the measurement instrument. These findings confirm that the measurement model is generally robust, instilling confidence in the reliability and validity of the considered constructs.

Correlation analysis highlights the relationships among constructs, while the results of statistical significance tests provide additional insights. It is found that Travel Motivation has a significant impact on e-WOM, Cognitive Image influences Decision to Visit, and Price Image contributes to e-WOM. However, some hypotheses, such as Price Image's impact on Decision to Visit and Cognitive Image's effect on e-WOM, did not support significant findings which is comparable with previous studies (Slamet et al. (2022); Samudro & Hamdan (2021); Badir & Andjarwati (2020)).

This research provides in-depth insights into the factors influencing e-WOM and Decision to Visit from the millennial generation's perspective. These findings can serve as a foundation for further understanding consumer behavior and its influence on travel decisions. As a next step, this study can contribute to the development of marketing strategies and destination management to attract millennials for visits.

The findings of this research certainly also have significant implications for practice in the tourism sector. Knowing that emotional aspects such as Affective Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation have a strong impact on e-WOM promotion, tourism practitioners can direct their efforts towards enhancing positive emotional and affective experiences for tourists. This can be achieved by paying attention to destination branding, pricing aligned with perceived value, and developing programs or travel packages that trigger strong travel motivations.

On the other hand, the limitation in the influence of Cognitive Image on e-WOM suggests that relying solely on rational information or facts may not effectively drive e-WOM promotion in the tourism sector. Therefore, tourism practitioners need to consider a comprehensive approach that integrates both emotional and rational aspects in their marketing strategies.

Additionally, understanding that the examined factors have limited influence on the decision to visit highlights the complexity of the tourist decision-making process. Tourism practitioners need to be aware that there are other factors beyond the variables studied that may have a greater influence on visitation decisions. Therefore, it is important to adopt a holistic approach that considers various aspects influencing visitation decisions, including psychological, social, and environmental factors.

Overall, these research findings can assist tourism practitioners in developing more effective marketing strategies and gaining a better understanding of the factors influencing consumer behavior in the context of promotion and visitation decisions.

6. Conclusions

A summary of the research findings indicates that, in the context of the study, the attributes that most positively impact electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) promotion are Affective Image, Price Image, and Travel Motivation. Meanwhile, Cognitive Image shows limitations in its influence on e-WOM, suggesting that rational or cognitive factors may have a lower impact compared to emotional or affective aspects. Additionally, the results suggest a limited influence of the

examined attributes, including e-WOM, on the decision to visit, indicating that factors beyond the variables studied may play a more dominant role in shaping visitation decisions.

Interestingly, Unique Image and Price Image, although considered potential factors, do not exhibit a significant positive impact on e-WOM or the decision to visit. The implication is that, in the context of this study, these factors may not be as crucial. Furthermore, there is no support for the mediating role of e-WOM in the relationship between image attributes and the decision to visit, indicating that e-WOM may not function as a mediating mechanism in the visitation decision-making process.

In conclusion, marketing strategies focusing on creating an effective image and emphasizing price considerations may be a priority. However, it is essential to note that these factors may not directly translate to an increased likelihood of visitors deciding to visit. The research findings also open opportunities for further exploration by investigating additional variables or contextual factors that may play a role in shaping e-WOM and the decision to visit, aiming for a more holistic understanding in this research domain.

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9. Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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